

~Welcome Todd Graham, new Green River Region Wildlife Supervisor~



Todd Graham (center) is assisted by game warden Jordan Winter (left). Graham and Winter were tagging big and trophy game skulls at the Alpine Antler Rendezvous. The photo was taken at the Alpine Elk Feedground.

Photo: WGFD Niki Johnson, Jackson Office Manager.

"I have always had a passion to be a game warden in Wyoming and I have been 'living the dream' for 25 years," Graham said. "Now I'm ready to do something different and challenging. With this new position, I hope to share any knowledge and skills I have gained over the past 25 years with the people I work with, especially the newer folks. I truly believe that Wyoming has the best wildlife resources in the country and the best people to manage those resources. Wyoming people really care about the conservation of our wildlife."

While attending the University of Wyoming, Graham worked two summers for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department at Daniel Fish Hatchery. Graham graduated with a Bachelors Degree in Wildlife Conservation Management from the University of Wyoming in December 1989 and went to work for the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources as a fish technician on Lake Powell. After four months, Graham transferred to Logan, UT to work at the Fisheries Experimental Station until April 1991 when he was hired to move back to Wyoming and work on the Game and Fish Glendo Reservoir Crew in the Laramie Region. He went on to graduate from the Wyoming Law Enforcement Academy in March 1992 and hired on as the game warden trainee in Lander. It was from here that Graham transferred to Mountain View, in southwest Wyoming, to begin work in his first game warden district.

"I spent six years as the Mountain View Game Warden," Graham said. "I wanted to get more experience in other districts, so I transferred to Alpine, WY in the Jackson Region when that position came open. I spent the next 16 months in Alpine until that warden station was officially closed. A warden district opened up in Wheatland, so I moved to Wheatland and worked there for two years and eight months. Finally, another transfer opportunity came about in Afton in 2002, so I headed to Afton where I spent nearly 14 years as the Afton game warden. I believe that I gained a lot of experience working in different areas of the state, so when a supervisor position came open, I knew it was the right time to apply for it."

Graham knows there will be times he will miss being a game warden in the "field", now that he has traded that role for the role of supervisor, but he is up for the challenge. He is looking forward to helping coworkers, too.

"It is pretty cool to come back to southwest Wyoming," Graham said. "Not only are we closer to family, my wife and I also love the variety of habitats in the region; from desert country to mountainous country, the Green River region has it all. I'm also looking forward to getting reacquainted with landowners, sportsmen and sportswomen. One of the strengths our people in the Game and Fish have is the ability to form strong, quality relationships with all of our publics. We will continue to work at forming and maintaining those relationships."

"I am available at the Green River Game and Fish Regional Office," Graham said. "I look forward to meeting and working with people."

~ Roaming Bears ~ Happy anglers ~ Nice deer ~ other game warden happenings ~



Baggs Game Warden Kim Olson had to move a black bear she says was causing trouble on Savery Creek. (*photo top left*) Olson had her camera handy when she checked a tiger trout from High Savery Reservoir and says this was this young man's first fish. (*above photo*) "We won't count the two white suckers he caught," said Olson. Olson also snapped the photo of these nice buck deer near Baggs. (*photo left*)



Kemmerer Game Warden Chris Baird (*photo left*) caught a nice trout on the Hams Fork; a much-needed break after a recent scary call. Baird assisted the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office and the BLM in locating a suspect in the remote desert area of the Carter Lease. "A female victim called 911 to report that a male subject she was travelling with had become stuck on a two track road several miles away from the highway," Baird said. "She reported he had attacked and injured her and that he was armed with a knife. Officers searched for several hours before finding the vehicle and it occupants; whereupon the male subject was arrested and found to be severely intoxicated. Both subjects had multiple injuries. The male subject was charged with aggravated assault and attempted rape. The male subject had a history of repeat offenses like these and is awaiting trial."

Enforcement Happenings

There are unsolved poaching cases in the Green River Region. If you have any information about any wildlife violation please contact your local game warden or the STOP Poaching Hotline at:

1-877-WGFD-TIP (1-877-943-3847)

- You can also report a wildlife violation at the WGFD website <http://wgfd.wyo.gov>



~ Moose rescue near Evanston ~ Horseback patrols ~ (someone has to do it!)



Evanston Game Warden Nick Roberts assisted Kemmerer Game Warden Chris Baird patrolling the roadless areas on Commissary Ridge for violators. (photo top, left)

Mountain View Game Warden Allen Deru reported helping a woman in Evans-ton get a calf moose out of her horse pas-ture. "It must have snuck in through a gate and then could not get back out of the high woven wire fence," Deru said. "The woman informed me she got home and the calf looked very stressed running up and down the fence line. The cow moose had twins and the cow and other calf were waiting pa-tiently outside the fence for it to get out. With the woman's help, we were able to get a gate opened and the calf out with-out any harm to the calf or getting charged by the cow. *Now that's a happy ending. :)* (photo left)

Green River Game Warden Andy Roosa has been checking fishermen and boaters on the Green River, from shore and from a kayak, along with U.S. Fish and Wildlife agent Jack Valentine from Seedskadee National Wildlife Refuge. "Compliance rates along the river are high overall. However, two individuals were recently cited for fishing without licenses and multiple warnings have been given for aquatic invasive species (AIS) violations, including launching without an inspection and failure to purchase an AIS decal," Roosa said.

*“Despite the Department’s education efforts, many nonresident boaters still **don’t seem to be getting** the message on AIS regulations, which require all watercraft coming from out of state to be inspected prior to launching on Wyoming waters,” Roosa said. “Many boaters still do not know about Wyoming’s AIS Decal requirements.”* Roosa also spoke to several big game hunters in the Little Mountain area, who were out scouting for elk and deer after finding out they had drawn tags in one of these difficult to draw limited quota license areas. Roosa shot these photos of deer and elk on Little Mountain. ***Looks like it will be a great hunting season on Little Mountain.***



From left to right: Mark Kot, Mark Zornes, Tom Christiansen, Dave Baer and Paul Gibson.

Jill Randall, Pinedale Terrestrial Habitat Coordinator, shared this information about a very important habitat improvement project in the Albert Creek area. (photos, top left) "This project is a cooperative project with Anadarko, Bill Sears and George Collins, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and WGFD to remove junipers from areas where they are encroaching into sagebrush habitat," Randall said. "It will help sage grouse by removing perches used by predatory birds and improve the condition of the sagebrush habitat for mule deer and sage grouse by making more resources available for sagebrush and understory grass and forbs. Areas on slopes where juniper communities are older and used heavily by wintering mule deer were avoided in order to maintain thermal cover for deer. This project is partially funded through Sage Grouse Initiative project dollars through NRCS. Future plans include treating the BLM sections in the same manner."

Green River Wildlife Management Coordinator Mark Zornes, along with Randall, Cheyenne Stewart and Troy Fieseler all participated from WGFD, as well as USFWS and NRCS employees. "Specific activities completed last week include delineating all treatment stands in seven sections with GPS units for ranch employees to come in and remove juniper trees," Randall said. "Cultural clearances were also completed to reduce the chance of unanticipated implications on other resources."

WGFD Sage Grouse Coordinator Tom Christiansen (photo bottom, left, center with hand raised) lead a tour of habitat improvement projects in southwest Wyoming with the Southwest Sage Grouse Working Group members. The group has been working together for sage grouse conservation since 2004.

In an effort to improve sage-grouse numbers and preclude the need for listing under the Endangered Species Act these citizens have agreed to work together to identify and help implement appropriate management practices.

The working group is comprised of local citizens interested in sage-grouse conservation. Members represent agriculture, industry, conservation, sportspersons, and affected governmental agencies. There are eight such groups operating in Wyoming.

~ WGFD GR Region takes part in STEM Educators Conference ~ Hunter Education ~



GR Habitat Biologist Kevin Spence and AIS Coordinator Wes Gordon (top) GR Wildlife Biologist Patrick Burke (below)

Wyoming teachers took part in the STEM Conference, which was hosted by Western Wyoming Community College and Sweetwater County Travel and Tourism Board. STEM stands for science, technology, engineering and math. Teachers visited area businesses, including the Green River WGFD Office, and took part in wildlife activities that require STEM. Teachers participated in an aquatic investigation using Project WILD activities with Lucy Wold, habitat and fecal belt transects (yup, fecal) with Kevin Spence and Wes Gordon, fisheries management with John Walrath and Robb Keith, and wildlife population management with Patrick Burke.



We call him the Happy Crayfish Guy (above)

Teachers age a fish using otoliths; calcium carbonate "earstones" behind the brain used for aging fish. (above, center)



GR Fisheries Biologist John Walrath (above) and GR Fisheries Supervisor Robert Keith (bottom, right)



~ Summer library wildlife education programs ~ Hunter Education



Children from the Rock Springs area took part in summer library programs, including one about Wyoming moose biology and ecology, and how to stay safe if they encounter a moose. *Green River Information and Education Specialist Lucy Wold* used the *Project WILD* activity *Oh Deer* and featured the book *Moose's Come Walking* by Arlo Guthrie. (photos left and below) Thank you to the *White Mountain Library* and *C Street Library* staff for their help and their photos!



Students took part in a *Wyoming Hunter Education Internet Field Day* at the *Green River Regional Office*. *Information and Education Specialist Lucy Wold* (photo left with bear target) and *Green River Game Wardens Rob Shipe* (photo bottom left, left) and *Justin Dodd* (right) assisted with the five-hour field day.

Wyoming law requires that anyone who was born on or after *January 1, 1966*, and wants to *hunt wildlife with a firearm on lands other than their own*, must have a hunter education certification. Wyoming accepts certifications from other states and Canadian Provinces.

There are multiple options to get your certification: (1) 15-hour traditional class, (2) online and then attend the Internet Field Day, and (3) through the Hunter Mentor Program.

If you need to get your Wyoming Hunter Education Certificate just go to our website <http://wgfd.wyo.gov> and click on the *Education Tab*.



Hunter Management Areas

Go to Wyoming Game & Fish Homepage



Access Yes Coordinator Andy Countryman checks a hunter on Bigelow Bench



Access Yes Technician Nicole Reed helps Andy put up new Walk In Area signs.

Southwest Wyoming Access Yes Coordinator Andy Countryman reports he and his new technician have been very busy preparing for the 2016 hunting seasons. "We maintained all of our 2015 properties for the upcoming 2016 hunting seasons," Countryman said. "The control of two access areas changed hands within the families due to uncontrollable circumstances. However, both families graciously resigned their properties into the Access Yes program due to past experience and relationships with the department. We also enrolled our first Walk-In Hunting property in Sublette County this spring. It is located southwest of Daniel and will allow antelope, deer, and elk hunting.

"We enrolled a new Walk-In Hunting property in Uinta County near Lone Tree. It will also allow all antelope, deer, and elk hunting. We expanded one of our current Walk-In areas in Uinta County with an archery only portion to utilize property otherwise inaccessible due to safety concerns around a windmill farm. There is a new hunter management area enrolled in the program and that area is located near Piedmont, Wyoming. This HMA is dedicated to pronghorn antelope hunting opportunities."

"If you go to our Access Yes website you will see that we implemented a new online interactive mapping system for sportsmen for the Walk-In Hunting and Fishing program. There is also a new downloadable GEO PDF file that is interactive with your smart phone and will allow sportsmen to track themselves while hunting/fishing on Access Yes areas. Also, if you go to the Green River Region website and click on the Access Yes Tab you can watch some videos recently shot to show you what these areas look like. Finally, I am fortunate to have a new Access Yes technician, Nichole Reed. She will be assisting with the program this year by maintaining access signage on the properties and assisting sportsmen and department personnel with other assigned duties."



Of course, NOT every rabbit has a disease like tularemia. There are plenty of cottontails to hunt this fall and we just want to give our readers a heads-up about the recent spike in tularemia cases in southwest Wyoming.

Cottontail rabbits appeared to have peaked throughout much of the region last year, and that trend should continue, yielding some very good hunting opportunities. Hunters should take advantage of this opportunity while it lasts, because cottontails are cyclic and numbers will soon begin to decline.

Snowshoe hares, a species that receives very little harvest pressure in the Green River Region, are numerous in some of the higher elevations of the southern Wyoming Range, Uinta, and Sierra Madre mountains, providing additional hunting opportunity. The Green River Region has limited opportunity for squirrel hunting, with the exception of red squirrels.

State Health Officials Caution about Tularemia

Sweetwater County health officials reported a number of *tularemia cases* in the region. Small game hunting season opens September 1 and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department would like to remind hunters and other outdoor enthusiasts to be aware of *tularemia*. This disease has been unusually active in many regions of Wyoming this summer, so it's particularly important to follow some common sense precautions to avoid being infected. Tularemia is generally a disease of rabbits, muskrats, beavers and squirrels but can be transmitted to many other species-including humans-through the bites of infected ticks and biting flies.

The Wyoming Department of Health cautions that people may acquire tularemia when bit by infected ticks, deer flies or horse flies. It can also be transmitted by handling infected animals, or through ingestion or contact with contaminated water or insufficiently cooked meat. *To help prevent exposure, Game and Fish and the Wyoming Department of Health suggest these simple guidelines:*

- Upon return from potentially tick-infested areas, search pets, self and children for ticks and remove if found.
- Avoid bathing, swimming or working in untreated water and avoid drinking untreated water.
- Avoid handling rabbits, squirrels or other animals that appear sick.
- Wear rubber gloves when skinning animals, especially rabbits and squirrels; skin animals in a well-ventilated area.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling sick or dead animals.
- Cook meat thoroughly before eating, especially rabbit and squirrel.
- The best source for tularemia information can be found at the Wyoming Department of Health website. <https://health.wyo.gov/publichealth/infectious-disease-epidemiology-unit/tularemia/> or [Wyoming Game and Fish Department wildlife health website.](#)



Office managers Sheila Watts (right) and Regina Dickson (left) pose with their new boss, Green River Region Wildlife Supervisor Todd Graham.

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~Critter Spotlight~
 Sandhill crane
 By Mark Zornes a.k.a. Leopold



- Wyoming's only extant crane species, the sandhill crane is a large game bird famous for its rolling trumpeting call and migrations. Two subspecies can be found in the state, both lesser sandhills and greater sandhills. Some people occasionally mistake this bird for a large heron, but these are easily distinguished in flight by the position of their head. Herons carrying their head "on their shoulders" with a folded neck in flight, while cranes carry their head on an outstretched neck.
- Sandhill cranes conduct long distant migrations in a north and south manner with season. Most of Wyoming's sandhills winter in Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona. The majority of lesser sandhills stage on the Platte River in Nebraska, where an estimated 450,000-500,000 gather before continuing their journey, an impressive spectacle all wildlife enthusiasts should hope to observe.
- Sandhill cranes are omnivorous, feeding on a variety of food items with their long sharp beaks. Given their propensity for eating cultivated grains like corn and wheat, they can be viewed as a nuisance by agricultural producers. In addition to numerous plant materials, sandhills are known to consume aquatic insects, snails, small mammals and small ground nesting birds, reptiles, and amphibians.
- Sandhill cranes are a very large bird, typically standing on their long legs from 3-4 feet in height. They can have a wingspan of 7 1/2 feet. They frequent riparian habitats, wet meadows, pastures and agricultural fields. You might encounter them in timber stands occasionally in mountain habitats. These birds nest in bogs, marshes, and saturated meadows during the late spring to early summer in Wyoming, and typically have 1-3 young (usually 1 or 2 in Wyoming). These chicks are referred to as "colts" for cranes. While adults are primarily gray in coloration with a bright red forehead, colts begin their lives a rufous color, gradually molting to the adult form.